

John Nulsen, MD
Claudio Benadiva, MD, HCLD
David Schmidt, MD
Lawrence Engmann, MD, MRCOG
Andrea DiLuigi, MD
Daniel Grow, MD, MHCM

Marie Heslin, APRN, ANP-BC
Deborah Hintz, APRN, ANP-BC
Glorimar Diaz, APRN, FNP-BC

February 22, 2021

Re: Proposed Bill No. 6321: An Act Concerning Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act

To: The Honorable Gary A. Winfield
The Honorable Steven J. Stafstrom
The Honorable Alex Kasser
The Honorable Matt Blumenthal
The Honorable John A. Kissel
The Honorable Craig C. Fishbein
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Connecticut General Assembly
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

My name is Paul Verrastro and I live in West Hartford, CT. I am currently Chief executive Officer of the Center for Advanced Reproductive Services (CARS), a fertility clinic with offices in Farmington, Hartford, New London, and Branford. I have worked at CARS since 2000.

Founded in 1984, CRS is Connecticut's largest fertility program and one of the most successful in the country. It is an academic affiliate of the University of Connecticut's School of Medicine and a member of the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technologies. We employ over 100 individuals across the state and are responsible for the births of over 13,000 babies, 1600 of which we attribute to LGBTQ families.

CARS would like to go on record in support of the Connecticut Parentage Act (Proposed Bill No. 6321) and urges you to report this bill favorably.

CARS offers many advanced reproductive techniques to help patients achieve successful pregnancies. But current law in Connecticut limits who can be recognized as a parent once a baby is born. As a result, many of our clients have to fight to have their parental relationships with their children legally acknowledged. Notably, current law creates significant instability for the children of LGBTQ families, who are an important part of the population we serve.

The Connecticut Parentage Act provides a much-needed update that ensures all Connecticut children and families have equal access to establishing parentage. The Act also corrects various types of parentage discrimination that currently exist in state law. Connecticut has the second-highest rate of birth through assisted reproductive technologies (ART) in the country.¹ Among other things, the Act ensures that children born via ART enjoy the same protections under the law as do all other children.

Over the past two decades, I have seen a sea change in the number of families seeking our assistance becoming pregnant and giving birth. Now, we complete over 1,600 in vitro fertilization cycles in Connecticut each year. CARS has also seen significant increases in the number of same-sex couples who come to us for help becoming parent. Given recent data on family formation by LGBTQ people, we expect these trends to not only continue but accelerate. We want all the families we serve, including LGBTQ families, to know that their relationships with their children are legally secure.

The Connecticut Parentage Act would update Connecticut's laws to better recognize and protect the full range of children and parents in the state. Please support and favorably report Proposed Bill No. 6321.

Sincerely,



Paul Verrastro
Chief Executive Officer
Center for Advanced Reproductive Services
2 Batterson Park Road
Farmington, CT 06032

¹ *State-Specific Assisted Reproductive Technology Surveillance*, CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (Oct. 3, 2019), <https://www.cdc.gov/art/state-specific-surveillance/index.html>.